



SaddleBrooke Lincoln Day Luncheon

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer
Saturday, March 3, 2012

It's an honor to be here today -- at the Annual Lincoln Day Luncheon -- and I thank the Pinal County Republican Committee -- Fred MacKenzie -- Dick Alford -- Steve Kohut -- and State Chairman Tom Morrissey -- for the opportunity to be with you.

With all of today's introductions -- and all of these distinguished officials who are here today -- I'm reminded of a story told about the Lincoln-Douglas debates in 1858.

At one of them, Senator Douglas was introduced with a great tribute to his distinguished ancestors and the eminence of his family.

When he finished, Lincoln rose -- without an introduction-- and said: “I only know this about my ancestry: I come from a long line of married folks.”

Well, I, too, come from a long line of “married folks,” -- and I’m proud to say I belong to the party of Abraham Lincoln.

As you know, we recently celebrated Arizona’s 100th birthday – and it was Abraham Lincoln who presided over the creation of the Arizona Territory in 1863.

As Arizonans – as Republican Arizonans – we have much to be proud of.

After several years of hard work – after several years of tough decisions – we brought Arizona back from the brink with a budget that’s balanced -- and a cash balance that’s positive -- for the first time in years!

Expenditures are down almost 20 percent – and the number of state employees is down almost 15 percent.

Our state government is smaller with state personnel spending falling \$200 million between 2007 and 2011 – a huge reduction!

Compared to the population we serve – our workforce is one of the most efficient in the nation.

We've rescaled our state's largest entitlement program to fit the budget we have -- not the budget we want.

We've consolidated, eliminated or privatized operations across state government. In the history of this state, no other Governor has cut state government more than I have.

Now, fixing what afflicts our great nation will not be so easy.

However, if there's one thing I learned from my mother and my years of public service it's that life is about choices.

It's that doing the right thing, almost always means doing the hard thing.

It's choosing what's tough over what's tempting.

It's choosing the truthful over the false.

And, it's choosing government that's necessary -- over government that's merely desired!

Speaking about the choices voters had before the 1984 election, President Ronald Reagan said:

“The choices this year are not just between two different personalities, or between two political parties.

“They are between two different visions of the future. Two fundamentally different ways of governing – their government of pessimism, fear and limits ... or ours of hope, confidence and growth.”

It seems to me, there are still two very different visions of the future. We face increasing economic and military challenges around the world; yet we have a president

more inclined to apologize for America, than to first uphold Her principles.

And, we have a president who seeks deeper division, through class warfare, a calculated politics of envy, and cynical appeals to racial grievance -- even as he issues earnest-sounding calls for civility.

We confront persistent economic instability and decline; yet we have a president who demands more of the same big-government excess that triggered it.

But what should bother us most is that we have a president who suggests that America is not an exceptional nation.

What other country has sent its finest young men and women to fight on distant battlefields for justice and peace?

What other nation ever rose to such strength; yet rose not to conquer, but to protect?

What other such nation has acted not to dominate, but to liberate?

We're an exceptional nation, all right.

That's just a fact -- written in blood and sacrifice of American patriots and their families.

President Obama doesn't have much in common with Ronald Reagan, but the principal difference between the two men is fairly simple.

One longed to spread the wealth; the other lived to spread freedom.

In my book, I tell of my meeting with President Obama in the Oval Office when I looked him in the eye, told him I didn't want to talk about so-called "Comprehensive Immigration Reform" while our border was out of control!

I'm reminded of President Obama whenever I think of that line in the movie "Braveheart" -- when William

Wallace says to Lord Craig, "There is a difference between us. You think the people of this country exist to provide you with position. I think your position exists to provide those people with freedom. And I'm going to make sure they have it."

Here's a newsflash for the President: "You can try to ignore me, you can sue me and you can even walk away when I'm talking to you. However, this is one governor who will not back down until you do your duty for the State of Arizona and America!"

Now, I understand that President Obama's campaign thinks Arizona is in play ... that he can win here in Arizona.

What do you think?

I say . . . game on!

Arizonans are smart.

They actually remember what politicians promise them. So, they're going to hold President Obama accountable for all his broken promises.

The 2010 election was historic and consequential, and if we continue to pull together and work hard -- there is going to be another like it in November.

Thank you for allowing me to be with you this afternoon. I'm so very grateful to have shared this evening with you, and to have drawn strength from being with you.

May God bless all of you and your families -- may God bless Arizona -- and may God always bless and protect the United States of America. Thank you.